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CHILDREN OF THE SUN.

CHILDREN of the SUN.

ETC., ETC., ETC.

POEMS

FOR THE YOUNG.

By CAROLINE M. GEMMER.

(GERDA FAY.)

With Original Illustrations.

LONDON:

FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.,

BEDFORD STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

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PREFACE.

THE design of this little work (like that of its predecessor, "Poetry for Play-hours") is simply to entertain children through the medium of rhyme and metre, and to open their hearts to the beauties of nature and the love of birds and animals.

Trusting that it may obtain a ready circulation among children of various ages, and so add, in its own small degree, to the enjoyments of the Christmas holidays.

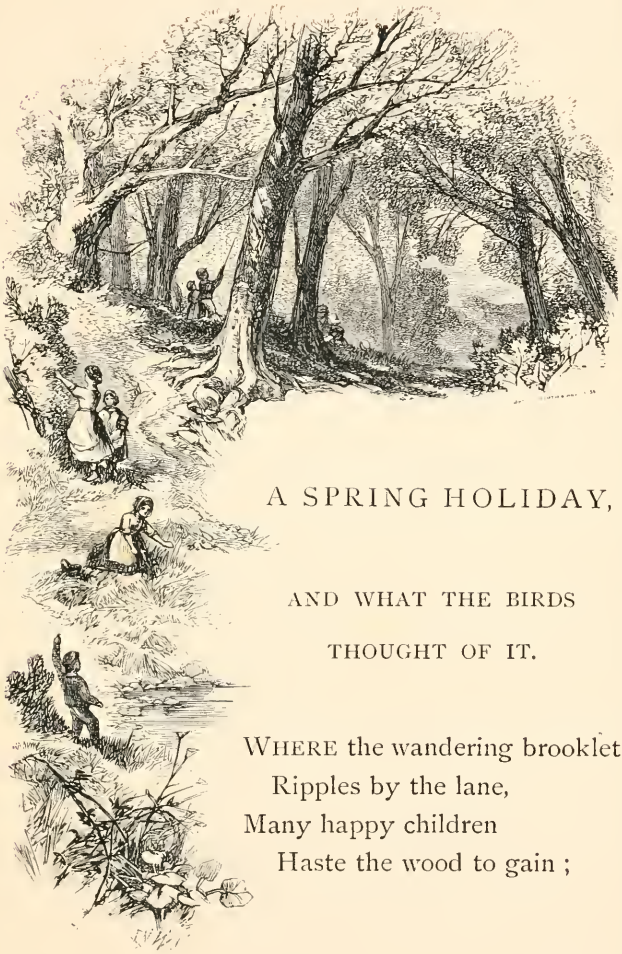
ST. LEONARD'S-ON-SEA,
December 11, 1868.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A Spring Holiday	9
Goody Budget	19
The Bat	22
A Butterfly Chase	24
Queen Bees	29
The Milk Maiden	34
Boy and Birds	40
The Donkey Ride	43
The Skylark	47
Bee Lessons	51
Evening Primrose	58
Who are we	60
The Sailor Brother	64
Gnat Wisdom	70
Mother's Love	71
The Sea Shell	74
Good Night	79
Night Winds	82
Harvest Home	84

PAGE

THE GLEANERS 86
ORCHARDS 88
SONG 91
CHILDREN OF THE SUN 93
A WHITE WORLD 101
THE PINEWOOD 104
MIDWINTER 109
BEDTIME 111
THE ROVER 112
AN AIR VOYAGE 117
YO, CHEERILY! 123
THE CAGED CANARY 127
THE PEAR TREE 131
OVER THE SEA 134
COVENT GARDEN MARKET 137
THE BOWER-BIRD IN THE CITY 142



A SPRING HOLIDAY,

AND WHAT THE BIRDS THOUGHT OF IT.

WHERE the wandering brooklet
Ripples by the lane,
Many happy children
Haste the wood to gain ;

For spirits pure and tender,
And innocently gay,
The spring-time in the forest
Has made a feast to-day!

There bluebells darkly cluster,
And low beneath the trees
Are scattered out of number
The baby primroses;

Each mossy hollow lighting
With faint wide-open eyes,
Like fairy lamps left shining
When day is in the skies.

With shouts of eager gladness,
Beside those flowery floors,
They fill their tiny kerchiefs,
And upheld pinafores;

And still their joys redouble,
And cries of gladness too,
"I see a path all golden!"
'And I see one all blue!'

Young Harry shouts from high,
"Look up, look up at me!"
They look up to the sky,
And see him in a tree,

With happy face and glowing,
And eyes that flash for fun,
And fair hair backward flowing,
That brightens to the sun.

"Six eggs of speckled silver
Within the thrush's nest!
This little one I pilfer,
The thrush may keep the rest."

And many are the birds
On whom this trick they play,
But one flew back in sorrow,
For her nest had gone away!

How long the children lingered
I leave the flowers to tell;
The Celandine was drooping,
And closed the Pimpernel,

And still the old wood echoed
With laughter and with cries,
That scared the whirring partridge
And bright-winged butterflies.

The clambering and the spoil,
The gathering of the flowers,
At length with heat and toil
Each little one o'erpowers,

The tiny aprons hang
That cost such care to fill,
The waxen hands unclasp,
The treasured blossoms spill.

And on a mossy bank,
All gathered in a heap,
Some stretch, and yawn, and sigh,
And some fall off to sleep.

A-weary with the riot,
With heat, and fun, and play,
We can listen now in quiet
What the birds have got to say.

We can listen to the whisper
Of the little tell-tale breeze,
And what the prattling brooklet
Is babbling to the trees.

Says a little bird, with feathers
All fluttering in the air,
"See all those weary children
Stretched in the shadow there;

All day I have been noticing
Their movements from above,
And some I do not like at all,
And some of them I love."

"And so do *I*, and so do *I*,"
Sang others in a gush;
"I love the laughing boy who spared
My nestlings," said the thrush.

"I cannot bear that ugly boy
Who took away my nest,"
Said the little weeping linnet,
And a sob burst from her breast.

Said the sparrow, "I can pardon
The boy who took a few
Of eggs like MINE, because they are
So beautiful and blue!"

But he who did not leave me *one*,"
The linnet cries in grief,
"I really think t'would serve him right
To hang him for a thief!"

The breeze is sadly moaning,
"I never more shall see
The pearl-crown of white blossom
On my little hawthorn tree.

"In vain I whispered shrilly
And wildly in despair,
As you little monster tore the flowers,
And left the branches bare.

"But I murmured low and kindly,
I kissed the drooping head
Of the girl who in her bosom laid
The violets that were dead.

"I blew with gentle power,
I pushed the boughs aside,
And lured her to the bower
Where lilies love to hide."

"Oh," said the chattering brooklet,
"I too have much to say
Of the noisy party playing
On my moss-grown banks to-day.

"Some knelt above me, bending
To see, with glad surprise,
How I mirrored back the glances
From their gay and eager eyes.

"I let my pearly water
With little gushings burst
Into their open mouths and palms,
That they might slake their thirst;

"Till one, so rudely throwing
Great heaps of mud and stones,
Has left me well-nigh choking
In tears and bitter moans!"

With grief the brook runs over,—
The children, resting near,
Perceive the sunset splendour
Begin to disappear.

They rise and hasten homeward,
Their sweetly-smelling store
Into nurse or mother's keeping
With dimpled hands to pour;

But three who bore no flowers,
With sulky frowning look,
Quarrelled together, kicking
The stones about the brook.

'Twas he who robbed the linnet,
And she who tore the May,
And he who stopped the running
Of the brook with stones and clay.

These all were discontented;
The rest, in pleasant mood,
With joy remembered ever
That spring day in the wood.

GOODY BUDGET.

GOODY BUDGET.

OLD Goody Budget awoke with the morn,
And her very first thought was her young green corn ;
With a moan and a mutter she turned out of bed,
A touch of rheumatics in shoulder and head,
Crying, "Woe to the first little bird I shall meet
Pecking the ears of my good green wheat!"
A slice of cold pudding she put in her pocket,
Caught her gown in the door in her hurry to lock it,
Then hobbled along, with a quivering clutch,
As fast as she could, on her old oak crutch ;
For quoth she, "By the clock it is half-past four,
And the rogues have been up for an hour or more."

So sweetly they warbled by thicket and lane!
But to Goody they seemed to be saying quite plain,
"Eat, eat, eat! for there's plenty of meat
In old Mother Budget's good green wheat!
There is no one to watch it, and no one to scare,
We can breakfast so nicely before she gets there.
Sweet, O sweet, there is nothing so sweet
As old Mother Budget's good green wheat!"
"I'll teach you to whistle a different song,
I *will*," says poor Goody, "before it be long.
Shame on ye! to rob the old widow, indeed,
That has but an acre to cut and to seed!
Go rob the rich farmers (*they* never need grudge it),
But leave my one acre," said poor Goody Budget.

So chatting, she toddled the fourth of a mile,
Till she came to her own pretty corn-field and stile;
Then she rapped on the rail, and the birds at the sound

Left their delicate meal, and rose up from the ground,
With a whirring of wings and a terrified cry,
But one sweetly twittered, as bidding good-bye,
"How little the prejudiced know their best neighbours!
Your crop had been small but for us and our labours;
But for us and our comrades, with quick eyes and bill,
Slugs and snails on the young wheat had feasted at will.
If you only had *seen*, why, you never had dared——"
Here the stick knocked the rail, and he fled away scared.
While munching her pudding the weary old dame
Sat her down on the stile just as wise as she came.

THE BAT.

DUSKY Bat in woollen coat,
Like a boat
Sailing on a silver ocean,
Dark against the moonlit sky
Thou dost fly ;
Drowsy-sweet to ear and eye
Is thy motion.

Half a mouse and half a bird,
Cloaked and furred ;
Shrilly-noted, but unseeing,
All day long from bough or beam,
In a dream
Hanging, but with day's last gleam
Flitting, fleeing.

Curious creature ! that dost fleet
With the heat ;
But for thy small pinnace wheeling

Summer darkness were less dear,
And less clear
Brightest summer moonlight were,
Softly stealing.

Happy creature! tell me where,
When the air
Tells of winter—(evil-comer!)
Do the fairies carry you,
Taking too
All the fragrance, light, and dew
Of the summer?

THE BUTTERFLY CHASE.

CHASING a butterfly out in the sun,
See those two children how swiftly they run,
Out of the sunshine and into the shadow,
Leaping the ditch from the lane to the meadow,
After their prize,
With laughter and cries,
Brown-blowing locks, and the sun in their eyes.

Freddy has thrown his hot jacket of grey
Over a sweet-briar hedge on the way ;
Lilly's white frock flutters holding her back,
And its folds seem to drive her the opposite tack :
Zigzag the race,
A true butterfly's chase,
Fair-flowing hair, and the sun in one's face!

THE BUTTERFLY CHASE.

Freddy now gives a low, cautioning whistle:
"See, he has settled upon a blue thistle!
Stop—if *you* come he will open his wings,
You girls are such wild little fluttering things!"
Once to make ready,
Cautious and steady,
"Hurrah, I have him at last!" shouted Freddy.

Yes, they have caught their fair captive, 'tis true,
But his beautiful colours are hid from the view;
And if they should let but one painted wing go,
He would beat the bright dust from the other, they know.
What's to be done?
For this is no fun,
It was merrier racing about in the sun.

Says Lilly, "Perhaps this gay butterfly treasure,
If dried in a box, might at times give us pleasure."

"But who is to kill him?" says Freddy; "not *I;*
So cheer up, my hearty, and never say die!
Live and be gay,
On a fine summer's day;
To sign your death-warrant would spoil the whole play."

Away flies the butterfly back to a nettle,
But this time it takes him a long while to settle:
O fear not, gay creature, though life may be brief,
It will not by torture be turned into grief,
Bask in the light,
Amid blossoms as bright,
And droop when you're weary to die out of sight!

THE QUEEN BEES; OR, HOW THE BEES SWARM.

A TRUE STORY.

A BABY Queen in the old Queen's hive
Was fed for many a day
On whitest honey, kept alive,
And tended carefully

By old Bee-nurses, singing old
Bee-songs with drear intoning,
Who many dark Bee-histories told,
In voices cracked and droning.

They told of Queens who had lost their lives
Before they gained the throne,
Of banished Queens who had no hives,
But reigned in woods alone;

Of baby Queens, who at their birth
Were murdered in the cell,
Of Queens of most surpassing worth
Waxed up, alive and well!

And the song came to the baby Queen,
Like the wind through the ivy humming,
And she smiled in her sleep, unweeting of
The evil days that were coming.

For the old Queen loved not the royal babe,
And if she had had her way,
She had flown to the cell of the infant Queen,
And stung her to death as she lay!

But a guard from the royal nursery kept
The envious Queen at bay,
One half the guard kept watch by night,
And the other half by day.

The baby Queen awoke one morn
In her youthful strength complete,
With her marvellous eyes and her sting half-drawn,
A Queen! from head to feet.

And she hummed to her guard, and they answered low,
As she flew from her enemy's hive,
For she knew if the old Queen happened to know,
She might never get out alive.

O what a crowd of loyal Bees
Followed their queenly lady!
Murmuring round her, under the trees
Of the orchard sunny and shady.

Clustering thick in the sunshine warm
Shadowing rose and briar,
With a noise like the rush of a sudden storm,
Or the roar of a furnace fire.

A sugary hive turned upside down
Invites the Bees within,
And a small bell rings in a tinkling tone,—
A dreamy, drowsy din!

And they hum to the music of the bell,
And the ring of the old tin kettle,
And the open hive with its sugary smell
Inviting them in to settle.

So her Majesty flies from the woodbine flower,
And into the hive she dips,
And they bicker and buzz in and out for an hour,
When the gardener suddenly slips

A thick cloth over the hiving bees,
Imprisoning the angry band,

Then sets the new company under the trees
With a steady and careful hand.

And now on the bowery bench behold,
Close under the sunny wall,
The new swarm humming in peace with the old,
And blossoms enough for them all!

THE MILK MAIDEN.

My pretty Bell, my milk-white cow,
You're worthy of a song ;
So dark your eyes, so wide your brow,
Your horns so smooth and long ;
Oh, what would mother do and I,
But for the milk that you supply ?

My father died three years ago,
And left us both so poor,
To buy us bread we must have sold
This cottage on the moor,
Except for you, my gentle Bell,
Who give us food and more to sell.

You hear me click my pail at morns,
With loving eyes and dumb,
You turn your stately head and horns
In welcome as I come,
And then, to make your service free,
You let your white milk down to me.

All day you feed on flowers and grass,
And throw a peaceful shadow;
How sweet your breath is as I pass
For water to the meadow!
How calm your lowings as I call
You up to milk at evenfall!

You 'mind me of a pleasant day,
Before our cares began,

A fair cow-calf and full of play
At father's side you ran ;
I rose, and from the garden seat
I flew to meet him in the heat.

He stooped to kiss me ; on my head
A kindly hand he set :
" It is your birthday, little maid,
My sweet child Margaret ;
And see a precious birthday gift,
Too heavy for your hands to lift !"

That summer, looking back, appears
Almost without alloy ;
The world was younger by three years,
And three times three in joy !
Each bud that blossomed in its kind,
About your neck I loved to wind.

And when I led you down to drink
At evening in the cool,
All gay with marigold and pink,
Your shadow in the pool

Shone whitely from the reedy bank,
Shaking the blossoms as you drank.

One day the parson met us two
  Upon the heathery waste,
(Ripe wheat and corn-flowers, red and blue,
  Your budding horns enlaced,)
His voice was grave, and yet he smiled,—
"A pretty playfellow, my child!

"But, Margaret, to die at last,
  As others of her race."
And then, as if to cheer me, passed
  To some old time or place,
Where milk-white cows were dressed as fine,
And slain by priests before a shrine;

While proud procession, dance, and song,
  And hymns to heaven reared,
In some wild worship, sweet and strong,
  The victim's spirit cheered,
And so with pomp and pageant gay
The harmless life-blood welled away.

"Dear sir," I blushed and faltered low,
"She shall not suffer worse,
But if her harmless blood must flow
Unstartled by a curse,
Swift death shall take her unaware,
Without a sight or sound to scare.

"No brutal blow or cruel kick
Her beauty has defiled:"—
Then father, working hard, fell sick
And left his orphan child,
And thus I grew to love you more
For his sake when my heart was sore.

You fill my life with pleasant care,
My willing hands you fill;
By you, our table, else so bare,
Is decked with plenty still,
And since you give a flowing pail,
"Sweet milk!" I cry about the vale.

I've set the milk, I've skimmed the cream,
I've scoured the dairy floor,

The sun is setting in the stream,
And from our cottage door
I see you in a golden glow
Of sky and water, wading slow
To browse upon the moor.

THE LITTLE BOY AND THE BIRDS.

LITTLE birds that sing in tune
In the leafy woods of June,
How I wish you'd tell me why
Such a little boy as I
Always frighten you away
When I want to talk and play!
See, the sun is getting low;
When it meets the ocean billow,
You will rock upon a bough,
I shall rest upon a pillow.
Tell me something ere I go,—
See, the sun is getting low.

How I wish I could find out
What you talk and think about!
I should like to learn your way
Always to be good and gay;
For your songs, so fresh and free,
Show you're happy as can be.

Little birds, how fast you fly!
Little birds, how well you sing!
Is it pleasant up on high,
That such pleasant news you bring?
See, the sun is getting low,
Tell me quick, I want to know!

Tell me how you sleep at night,
When the moon is shining bright;
For I sometimes see it shine
On that little bed of mine,
Through the pane and curtain too,—
Does it never waken you?
When the night-winds shake the trees,
And few stars are in the sky,
When you hear the moaning seas,
And the winds sing hushaby,
Are you not afraid at all?
Do you never have a fall?

When the rains begin to pour,
And the winds and waters roar,

When the moon and stars are gone,
And you're in the dark alone,
When there's lightning, storm, and thunder,
What do you do then, I wonder?

THE DONKEY-RIDE.

TWO pretty panniers of neat-woven osiers,
Planted on one sturdy donkey's brown shoulders,

Rosy and happy are two little girls,
As they ride down the lane, with the wind in their curls:
Gallop away,
Little Bessy and May,
The shadows are soft, and the sunshine is gay!

Bessy, half frightened, is constantly calling,
"May, sister May, do you think we are falling?"
May answers back, like a bird from a tree,
'Falling, dear Bessy? no falling for me!'
Gallop away,
Little Bessy and May,
Fresh as the dewdrops, and bright as the day.

"Bessy," says May, "do you see through the trees
Little brown Alice sit watching the bees?
She has taken her knitting, and then, when they swarm,
She will run up and carry the news to the farm."
Prattle away,
Little Bessy and May,
Hum like the bees when they've plenty to say.

"Here's the old beggar, who in her own fancy
Is still a young beauty, and called 'pretty Nancy;'
She smiles, and seems happy, although she is mad,
We will give our new pennies to make her more glad."
"The saints above bless ye,
Miss May and Miss Betsy,
So ride in the sunshine as long as they'll let ye!"

O poor pretty Nancy, you're growing so old,
And feathers and flowers won't keep out the cold,
Your cloak it is thin, and you've holes in your shoes,
And clothes that are better I hear you won't use;
Yet a sunshiny day
Makes you happy and gay,
And winter and sorrow you'll brave as you may."

See! their obstinate donkey now makes a full stop
Before some blue thistles he's longing to crop:

"Oh, do let him have some," they cry, "just a few,"
To the boy with the donkey; "now pray, Johnny, do!
For what would you say
If at dinner to-day
Your favourite morsels were taken away?"

Away by the rill that is rippling and gliding,
Away by the lane where the woodbine is hiding,
Away by the field that papa keeps his cows in,
Where the sheep and the lambs are so busily browsing,
By the green way,
Where the wild roses stray,
For a toss of the haycock, a roll in the hay!

THE SKYLARK.

HARK, mother, do listen! above the green wheat,
What bird can it be that is singing so sweet?
For here there is neither a twig nor a tree,
About us the corn-fields, beyond them the sea,
So where can it sing from, and what can it be?

"Tis the song of a lark: and too happy is he
To rest on a bough or to sing from a tree;
So he twinkles to heaven, so shining and small,
And pours out his heart to the Father of all.
See, see where he comes! how his tiny wings glitter,
As he moves up and down with a rapturous twitter;
But rising or falling, he leaves not the bound
Of the plain that contains his low nest on the ground,

Where dwell his gay wife and his dear little
brood,
Whom he sings to, caresses, and comforts with
food.
The shadows are falling, the moon will soon
shine
On the field of green wheat, and the distant sea-
line,
It will touch with its splendour the lark's lowly
nest,
Where he sits with his dear ones so close to him
prest :
But with the first glimmer of light in the east
The lark will awaken, as if to a feast,
He will flirt out his feathers, and plume himself
neat,
He will leave his warm bed, and the field of
green wheat,
And warble Hosannas before he will eat!"

BEE LESSONS.

BEE LESSONS.

O! I wish our tasks were over,
For I cannot do my summing
While the brown bees in the clover
So merrily are humming!
While the winds with pleasant noise
Make a murmur like the seas,
And the little birds rejoice,
Loudly singing from the trees,—
Why should little girls and boys
Be less happy than the bees?
O! I wish our tasks were over,
For I cannot do my summing
While the brown bees in the clover
So merrily are humming.

I wish I were a bird,
I wish I were a bee,

Or a lizard in the sward
  Quickly darting up a tree,
Or a squirrel, shy and cunning,
  That pries about for food,
Or a pretty pheasant running
  Up the pathways in the wood,—
O, wouldn't I have fun in
  These long school hours if I could!
Then I wish our tasks were over,
  For I cannot do my summing
While the brown bees in the clover
  So merrily are humming.

I know a weeping willow
  With a spring beneath its shadow,
Whose light waves laugh to follow
  One another through the meadow,
The sparkling pebbles glitter,
  For the sunshine seems to love it,
But the weeds a carpet fitter
  For a dance have greenly wove it,
And the water-wagtails twitter,
  And the swallows dip above it:

I wish I were a wave,
To dance and play and sing,
Or a little bird to lave,
Flirting water from my wing.
The glancing water dropping
So light from hill and feather,
With such twittering and hopping,
And joy in the fine weather!

I know an orchard olden,
Where long low shadows fall,
And cowslips bright and golden
Make such a lovely ball,
Where grasshoppers are skipping,
And chirping blithe and free,
And little birds are dipping
In the fruit flowers of the tree,—
The plum, and the golden pippin,
And sour green gooseberry.
I would not scare the thrushes,
Or hurt one living thing,
I would sit beneath the bushes
Tying cowslips on a string.

I know a running stream
Where shining fish are darting,
Through the water's shadowy gleam
You may see them sudden starting;
Now if I had my wish
I would take my line and float,
And angle there for fish,
From a bank or from a boat:

And then we'd make a feast,
I, Emily, and Rover,
Nor trouble in the least
The servants or my mother,
For three long sticks we'd tie
And light our gipsy fire,
With a kettle hanging high
Above the crackling briar,
We would get the worn-out pan
To fry our dainty fishes,
And pick up, as we can,
Some old cracked plates and dishes,
We would wash them spick and span
If I might have my wishes:

Some tea and bread I'd buy
With this my bright new shilling,
And a teapot, sure am I
Nurse to lend us would be willing,—
But O, this stupid summing,
It never will be over
Till the bees are homeward coming
From the fields of scented clover!

Then the little boy (faint-hearted)
Leant his head against his slate,
Brothers, sisters, had departed,
And his grief was very great;
And he sighed, "My chance is over:"
"How I wish that I were you,
Old brown bee in the clover,
With no stupid sums to do!"

But there came an angry "*buzz*"
(For a bee had overheard),
"Oh, if he were one of *us*,
We would take him at his word!
Then he should not idle thus,
We would slay him with the sword!

The good-for-nothing boy,
  Thinking only of enjoyment!
Our labour is our joy,
  Our pleasure is employment."
And there came a dreadful humming,
  Like an army rushing on,
" *We are coming, we are coming,*
  We will sting him for a drone!"
And the brown bee buzzed about,
  And hummed upon the slate,
Rubbing all the figures out,
  The little and the great;
And the boy forgot to pout
  Or to murmur at his fate.

And the bee, in anger hot,
  Flew briskly far away:
But the idler ne'er forgot
  The lesson of that day;
Nor was it learnt in vain,
  For he tried with all his might,
And worked his sum again,
  And brought the total right.

And he heard a gentler humming,
For his lessons now were over,
And the weary bees were coming
From the fields of purple clover!

EVENING PRIMROSE.

WHEN sleepy birds their nightly praises
Have sung, and Day is dead,
And little sun-adoring daisies
Are closed and gone to bed,
Then evening's primrose softly raises
Her mild moon-lighted head.

Her yellow flowers above the ground
Like lighted amber glow,
And when the fair moon shines around
She faintly shines below,
And drowsy insects without sound
About her come and go.

But should you walk abroad by night,
In some wild flowery swamp,
Where no fair moon is shining bright,
But all is dark and damp,
More beautiful and full of light
Each pallid flower-lamp.

A myriad frail ephemera
In dizzy circles swim,
Warm, woolly-coated moths appear,
And drink beneath her brim,
And throw their dusky shadows clear
Across her lighted rim.

With fluttering wings, like whited paper,
Amid the evening heat,
The moths mistake her for a taper
That will not singe their feet,—
So shines the flower through night's dark vapour,
And full of nectar sweet!

But when upon the approach of dawn
The insects steal away,
And sink to rest on bush or lawn,
Like children tired of play,—
The languid flower with petals drawn
Expires before the day!

WHO ARE WE?

WE came through the window, we danced on the floor,
Then shot like an arrow of light through the door ;
Six steps at a time up the staircase we sped,
And lay in a garret asleep on a bed ;
Slipping into a box with a half-opened lid,
We looked through the linen and stealthily hid :
We leapt from the landing, and cleared at a bound
A distance just three flights of stairs to the ground ;
We passed through the kitchen, and put out the fire,
The captive bird sang as we winked at his wire ;
Falling over the coal-box we snuffed out in turn
Eight matches old cookie was trying to burn ;

Then, lest she should catch us, we ran after
Mary,
To sip up the milk and the cream in the dairy :
When she covered the bowls up we thought it so
hard,
We slipped out to play by ourselves in the
yard.
We sailed in a gutter, we hung in a doze
On a line of wet tablecloths, blankets, and
clothes ;
To the dog in the kennel we said, " How d'ye
do ? "
As we burnished his chain till it glittered like
new ;
We winked in his face till he blinked back to
see,
Then we climbed to the garden by means of a
tree.
In diamonds, rubies, and silver and gold,
We dressed up the flowers that grew in the
mould,
Turning grass into emeralds, dew into fire,
Rejoicing the birds till they sang in full quire ;

'Twixt the wings of a lark we rode up to the sky,
But he shook us so much that we thought we should die ;
So we slid from his back, and we made us a bed
Of a sweet rosy cloud, while he sang overhead.
On a gossamer swinging we laughed to the breeze,
We kissed up the dew from the grass and the trees,
We slept without snoring on streamlet and hill,
We whirled in the mill-dam, and raced round the mill ;
Till the day being hot (for the hay it was brown),
We steamed up the river and landed in town.
In the walls of a college we idled about,
We joked with the students that passed in and out,
We laughed out at lecture, and winked as we sat
At the feet of the lecturer, low on the mat ;
Getting thirsty, and thinking it all very dry,
We followed a water-cart just going by ;

We stopped at a pastrycook's, feasting on
sweets,
We revelled in strawberries, ices, and treats,
Then silently vanished, like thieves on their
traces,
As surly old night shut the door in our faces!

THE SAILOR BROTHER.

PART I.

THIS world in rolling round and round
  Turns day to night, and night to day:
How clear each early morning sound!
  How calm the early morning ray!

This garden freshly bathed in dew,
  All light and shadow, surely seems
Too beautiful to be quite true,
  Like happy places seen in dreams.

The glittering scythe is sharply drawn
  Across the turf,—and sweet to me
The scent of hay upon the lawn,
  The song of birds upon the tree.

THE SAILOR BROTHER.

How clear their carols and how glad!
But I am not so glad as they:
Dear little birds, my heart is sad
Because my brother is away!

Here, from this window, I can see
His garden lying by my own,
The sweet musk-rose, the myrtle tree,
The clove carnation, newly blown;

The lithe convolvulus that rears
Her painted blossoms far away,
The dusky lavender's blue spears
Where bees are murmuring all the day:

There, where the soft green light is thrown
From flickering foliage overhead,
There is the little seat of stone,
Where I have worked while he has read.

But now my brother is at sea
So many, many miles from here!
I wonder does he think of me
As I of him,—my brother dear!

He cannot hear my voice, or see
  How oft my eyes with tears are dim,
And very strange it seems to me
  That morning *here* is night to *him*.

Part II.

Oh, could I take a fairy boat
  And launch it on this flowing stream,
Where silver water-lilies float,
  And summer gadflies dart and dream,

And reach the sea and swiftly glide,
  And shoot across the rolling blue
(As though the rapids' dangerous tide
  The savage strapped to his canoe),

And find my brother's ship, and tread,
  Up-springing by some idle rope,
When all the crew had gone to bed
  And left the watch to him and Hope!—

To step on board and kiss his cheek,
Slow-pacing on the moonlit deck,
To talk to him, and hear him speak
(One happy arm about his neck);

And change his wonder into fun,
And laugh and put his questions by,
Till, as the clock was striking One,
He'd turn and say rebukefully,

"Yes, yes, the fairies helped you here,
But how will you get back? for shame!"
And then to smile, and disappear,
And slip back home the way I came,

To cross the lawn with flying feet,
And creep to table like a mouse,
And take my place, and make my peace
If missed a little from the house,—

That would be good! But then, again,
If I should find him grieved or ill,
My visit would be only pain,
And I should be less happy still!

GNAT WISDOM.

SHINE, Glow-worm, or I cannot wait
To see you light your fiery spark ;
I wish you would not shine so late,
Or that the day got sooner dark !

Sweet meadow rill, how fast you run,
And make sweet music on your way !
My jolly spider, you have spun,
And feasted royally to-day !

Beware, ye gnats, in rushing tides
That circle in the summer air ;
"My child, the death that Heaven provides—
Since death must be—is best to share !"

MOTHER'S LOVE.

"Here, boy," said the Baker (and set down his
tray
As he showed a young bird from the nest),
"If you give it a bit of soaked bread of a day,
And a little boiled egg,—it will thrive, one may
say,
And whistle as well as the best."

So they hung the poor bird from a window hard
by,
In the alley so noisy and heated:
He fluttered his half-feathered wings with a cry,
And pined for his mother, the air, and the sky,
And as for the food, would not eat it.

All night while the family slumbered below,
This poor little bird could not rest;
He heard the great clocks striking out solemn
and slow,
The world turned no faster for him or his woe,
And his beating heart ached in his breast.

At dawn, chill and starving, he leant at the side
Of his cage, with a faint little squeak:
When lo,—a quick flash! his own mother replied,
He opened his famishing mouth very wide
As she dropped some warm food in his beak.

She passed:—and the little one thought it a dream,
And fluttered and fretted—but no!
Again came the flash, and the shadowy gleam
Of warm wings and eyes, with fresh morsels that seem
To warm his stiff limbs to a glow.

And every day came this poor mother-hen
Afar from her mate and the rest,
Many times in a day to the dwellings of men,
To feed her poor starveling again and again,
Then wearily back to her nest.

The baker's boy wondered the bird was alive,
For no bread-crumbs or egg would it eat;
Yet it grew, and it flew, and to whistle would strive,

And at length, through a gap in the cage did contrive
To escape from the close city street.

The hedges were white with the garlands of Spring,
The mother-bird sitting alone
On her nest in the beech-tree, while yet on the wing,
The father was teaching their young ones to sing,
Whose notes were as gay as his own.

A faint little voice sang so sweet a reply,
It touched the stout heart of the tree,
The leaves lightly rustle, the summer winds sigh,
The mother looks up, with a fond startled cry,
And lo, the dear captive is free!

THE SEA-SHELL.

PUT your ear to this shell
And listen well ;
Do you hear the far sea roaring ?
Ah, would we were there, my sister Bell !
There is little in life I should like so well
As to be where the blue waves glitter and swell
Over golden sands outpouring.

You would like it as well,
Sweet sister Bell,
To trip by the blue sea water;
To fill your basket with many a shell,
And pretend you were taking them out to sell,
Then run away quicker than I can tell,
Lest a little wave whisper, "We've caught her!"

But when you grew bolder,
My sister Bell,
You would paddle and play like me;
You would talk to the fisherman mending his net,
And scramble for seaweeds, nor care for the wet,
Springing over the pools like a white water jet
On the green slimy rocks by the sea.

If a tempest should gather,
My sister Bell,
And roaring waves howl to the blast,
We would watch the great porpoises, bloated and black,
Rise, tumbling and plunging, like pigs in a sack,
And hear the wind raving so wrathfully back,
And which can shout loudest and last.

But when it is over,—
Ah, who can tell,
As we run out next morning to see,
The shells and the seaweed, green, ruddy, and white,
All wet with salt water, and glistening with light,
Like a room full of playthings thrown up in the night,
To be found by my sister and me!

You would like it so well,
Sweet sister Bell,
That we seldom must leave one another,
For fear, O for fear, that some fish of the sea,
Or bird of the air should be jealous of me,
Or beautiful mermaiden, sportive and free,
Should bear her away from her brother!

GOOD NIGHT.

GOOD-NIGHT.

GOOD-NIGHT, my moss rose, marigold, and pink,
My tall white lily, shining on your stalk;
Good-night, my flowers: I wonder if you think
Of me at all, and wish that you could talk

As I do? O, there are so many things
I want to know! As if it gives you pain
To gather you,—and if the brown bee stings,—
And if you like the sun best, or the rain?

My marigold's asleep: She always shuts
Her eyes at sundown,—waking with the sun:
Good-night, my nut-tree! Ripen your green nuts
For me to gather when the summer's done.

Good-night, my evening primrose: But for you
Where would the night-moth, gnat, and beetle sup?
You serve them for a lamp and table too,
And give them honey in a golden cup.

Good-night, my giddy butterfly, now still :
I think it must be pleasant sleeping there,
Upon the rose's heart : And soon you will
Awake to flutter in the morning air.

Good-night to every little bird that flies !
Good-night, dear linnet : Far above my head
I see you sitting in the sunset skies,
And thanking God before you go to bed.

Good-night to cow and sheep, to lamb and kid,
To doe and deer,—and all the little fawns
That sleep together when the sun is hid,
And leap together when the morning dawns !

Good-night, good-night, to squirrel and to hare,
To cooing wood-doves, and their downy broods,
To all things furred and feathered everywhere,
That dwell in dewy fields and dusky woods.

Good-night, fair moon: When I am sleeping sound,
Your light will shine towards my garden creeping,
Each plant will throw its shadow on the ground,
And all be beautiful when I am sleeping.

Good-night, gay stars, that twinkle out at me
As in a game,—and never long remain;
I think the others, that I cannot see,
(Afraid to lose,) must call you in again!

Good-night to all I love, and that love me:
I'm very sleepy now: Dear brother Willy,
Your're next the window,—lift the blind and see
If the moon's shining on my silver lily,
Good-night! Good-night.

NIGHT WINDS.

THE fair forest leaves, how they tremble,
  Alone in the storm of to-night!
Those gay little elves
That will dance of themselves,
  And blink to the beamy daylight!

The flickering leaves, how they tremble,
  As, twinkling high up in the dark,
They are carried and curled
Almost out of the world
  By the wind blowing over the park!

But hush! little baby is waking!
  O sleep, pretty baby, in peace!
The wild winds are wrestling,
But thou, little nestling,
  Shouldst sleep like a bird in the trees.

"Of such is the kingdom of heaven"
(So said the Lord Jesus of old):
Our Shepherd is good,
And no wolf of the wood
Shall harm the young lambs of His fold.

Hush! hush! for the tempest is ceasing,
Light patters the silvery rain,
The forest leaves steeping
As if they were weeping
For friends lying low on the plain.

Then slumber, my baby, nor waken
Till earth's nightly journey is done,
And warm sunbeams woo
Thee to laugh and to coo,
And twinkle glad eyes to the sun!

HARVEST HOME.

Bring tables,—a white cloth spread over,
And furnish with meat, beer, and bread ;
There's a flush of red light on the clover,
And gold on the grey mountain's head.

Oh, rich is the harvest they gather,
Who toil through the heat of the day,
And they who have worked in the sunshine
May rest when the sun is away!

The hand of the reaper is weary,
The labourer telleth his hire,
The waggons with corn over-laden,
Are edged, like the mountains, with fire.

A shout for the harvest! They tarry
With wheat and ripe barley in ear,
To crown the proud horses that carry,
And toss up their heads to the cheer.

Give thanks to the Lord of the harvest,
Who sendeth the gracious spring rain,
The dew and the long summer sunshine,
To ripen the soft-swelling grain:

And shout, for the harvest is ended!
Three cheers, and a full-flowing cup!—
The moon by her planets attended,
Shines in as the harvesters sup.

THE GLEANERS.

LOOK again to the hill-side; the sun's setting light
Makes it fair as a picture, and shadowy-bright:

And see all these women and children! they come
From the fields where we carted, and cried "Harvest Home!"
Last night in the moonshine: And bear for their trouble,
Great loads of ripe wheat they have gleaned from the stubble:

All the stray ears by the reapers unbound,
All that the waggoners drop on the ground
They glean up and carry: a bell gives them warning
At eight in the evening and eight in the morning:
The miller then grinds up the grain with the bran,
The women make loaves of it,—each as she can,
The bread from their gleanings is wholesome and nice,
One day in the winter we'll beg for a slice!

THE ORCHARDS.

THERE'S a murmur of bees, and the mulberries fall,
For the sun of mid-August shines hotly on all;
There is gold on the green plum, and bloom on the peach,
And half-ripened nectarines that hang within reach.
The gay-banded wasp buzzes out of the fig,
And mellow-sweet apricots slip from the twig;
The long days, the bright days are slipping away,
The yellow leaf rustles, and fair fruits decay!

Above in the branches the little birds pipe,
"The berries of summer are pulpy and ripe;
Good Squire, we pray you to give us a share!
When the snow's on the ground, and there's frost in the air,

We will sing at your door through the gloomiest
day,
Then give us a little ripe fruit for our pay.

"We sang at your bridal—we sang at the birth
Of the little one, laid long ago in the earth.
When you chat by the fire, and smile, and forget,
We sit on the yew-bough and sing to him yet:
A song full of trust in a holier Will,
With a pause here and there—for the angels to fill!
We have songs for all seasons, both plaintive and
gay,
And ask but a plum or a peach for our pay."

Yes, dear little birds, there's enough and to spare,
But beware of a gun, and beware of a snare;
If *I* can see either I'll give you fair warning,
How sweet are your songs on this beautiful
morning!
Our country musicians, abroad or in cages,
Have surely a right just to pick up their wages:
Then eat! for the summer is slipping away,
The yellow leaf rustles, and fair fruits decay.

Yon noisy young rascal, who's bawling "Halloo!"
And springing a rattle, will never hurt you ;
The ugly black scarecrows that fill you with fear
They cannot run after, they cannot come near,
But the man—and the gun—and the net from the trees,
Beware, little birds, oh, beware of all these !

SONG.

SUMMER'S bright palace-dome
  Soon will be shutting,
Shout now for Harvest Home!
  Soon comes the nutting.

Yesterday swallows passed,
  Leaves fall to-day,
Blackberries (ripe at last)
  Purpling the way.

Squirrel with nuts and grain
  Storing his hollow,
Autumn has come again,
  Winter will follow!

Winter, with scanty cheer,
  Hands without hire,
Wild things for famine-fear,
  Venturing nigher.

Winter with ice and snow,
Cold blasts and stinging,
Where from a leafless bough
Robin is singing!

CHILDREN OF THE SUN.

"We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon."
Midsummer Night's Dream.

PART I.

"SISTER, what makes the Sun so red?"
My little brother said to me,
(As like a giant's fiery head
He slowly rose up from the sea).

The Sun is like a blazing ball,
Half-quenched by yonder watery haze,
And these faint reddish lines that fall
Upon the earth are called his rays,
"Stand in their light and feel the heat,
Does it not warm you—head and feet?"

"A little. But the earth is wet,
The pretty flowers they pout and weep,
As if they could not quite forget
The rain that drenched them in their sleep.
The Sun in England shines by stealth,
And hoards his heat to warm himself."

See, brother, see, the distant ships
Now half in light and shadow lie,
And yonder stately vessel slips
Her cable, sailing joyously
Before the wind, with white sails flowing,
I know—I know where she is going!

"Where is she going, sister, say?"

Full sixteen thousand miles away,
To that dear land so far from here,
Where we were born, across the seas;
Where there is sunshine all the year
To warm the birds, and grass, and trees;
Yon gallant ship is sailing thither,
Her white sails fluttering to the day,

And takes our love and blessing with her,
To many a friend, now far away.

This plot of narrow garden land
Is as a tiny grain of sand
To that great country ; England's isle
A narrow dimly-lighted cell,
Encompassed by the Atlantic's coil,
And Northern Ocean's dash and swell,
Catching at times a sickly stain
Of sunlight, flashing through the rain,
Or struggling through low mists that brood
On sluggish streams or cultured plot,—
While in that country many would
Be glad if it were not so hot,—
You must not wish a warmer glare,
For it would burn the people there.

But, see ! the Sun has left his bed,
All golden, glittering like a lamp,
His slanting rays so swiftly spread,
And suck up all the fog and damp.

"And all the pretty flowers unclose
Their petals, looking brightly up;
And smell this beautiful red rose,
So full of sunshine, leaf and cup,
The Sun has warmed her petals dry,
And kissed, and told her not to cry!

"How very sweet, how beautiful!
But see, the sunshine comes and goes,
And yesterday 'twas dark and dull,
There was no light to warm the rose,
Were I a man I would not stay
In this cold England half a day,
I do not like the fog and rain,
I wish we were at home again!"

And yet the little birds are blest
That warble from yon gnarlèd trees,
The woodland dove has made her nest
In this dim island of the seas,
And human hearts, if less elate,
Are tender and compassionate;

And in this world of loss and gain
(Like sunbeams kissing up the rain),
The grace of God will often make
  The meanest things to shine and rise,
Like to the arrowy joys that wake
  The lark, and lift him to the skies,
Loud singing far beyond the shroud
Of island mist and ocean cloud!

And if the sun more faintly streams
Than in that lovely land of dreams,
  Where now the flowers have gone to rest,
In the verandah's shade reclining
Beneath a moon so brightly shining,
'Twould serve them well to read, or reap,
Or anything—except to sleep.
  And every bird is in its nest,
And friends are lingering awhile
To talk of England with a smile,
Kissing kind hands across the sea
To you, my brother, and to me;
And if the sunless hours are long,
The warmth—how weak, the wind—how strong,

Yet by the birds that sing so loud,
With every beam that breaks the cloud,
The rainbow set in stormy sky,
The morning mists that part and fly,
We yet may be as happy here
As where the sun shines all the year.

Part II.

The boy still held his sister's hand,
Although he could not understand
One half she said, he listened well:
Then to his mother ran to tell
About the good and gallant ship
Sailing so swift and steadily.
While to his cheek she pressed her lip,
And bade him take her out to see,

But breakfast-time must not be slighted,
  And bread and butter duly eaten;
His sister to the walk invited,
  Said, (as she stirred her tea to sweeten,)

"Let's spend a morning on the sands
In pleasant talk of other lands."

The Sun had drunk up all the dew,
The seaward path was warm and dry,
The briny breeze of ocean blew
About their faces pleasantly,
And for that morning all forgot
To sigh for skies more sultry hot.

Part III.

The fair ship far a-sea did ride,
Taking so joyously and fast
The favouring motion of the tide,
Ere long they only saw her mast.
The children kissed their hands and waved
White handkerchiefs with greetings warm,
"Good ship, we pray you may be saved
From loss by shipwreck or by storm
With all within you, young and old,
Our native country to behold!

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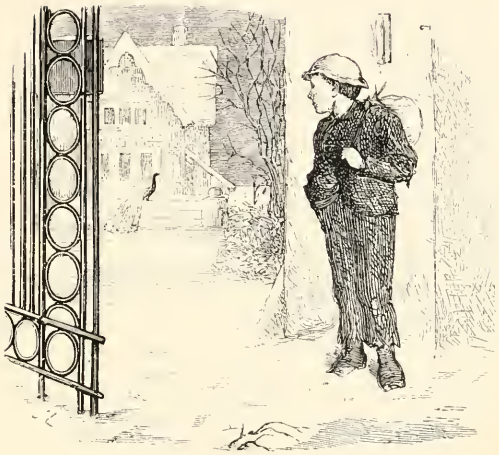
How strange to think the selfsame sea
Runs round the world continually,
With waves returning every one
Beneath the selfsame moon and sun!
Good-bye, dear ship; good-bye, fair sea,
Wild waves that ripple far from me!
Good-bye, and take our fondest kiss
To that New World from friends in this.
Good-bye." And with their last "Good-bye,"
The tall mast vanished from the sky.



A WHITE WORLD; OR, THE BEGGAR BOY.

SOFTER than down from the swan's white breast
The snow came down from the sky,
Filling the empty linnet's nest
Up in the tree-top high,

Lulling the poor, dying leaves into rest
As they flutter to earth with a sigh,
Weighing them down
With a silvery crown,
Low on the earth to lie.

Who crouchingly creeps, all dusky and mean,
On this pretty snow-carpet so dazzlingly clean
(As a poor unmannerly guest
Might creep to an Emperor's palace door,
And step, unannounced, on the beautiful floor
In beggarly raiment dressed.)

'Tis a poor orphan boy, who, in sunshine and rain,
The home of his childhood is trying to gain:
His jacket is thin,
And all slit to the skin,
And his shoes but half covered with leather.
Why, the little brown mouse,
In her hole in the house,
Is far better lodged from the weather!

See, see, where he stands looking in at the gate
To watch the blue peacocks parading in state,
With green and gold tails to the sun ;
And the dainty white cat,
That steps pit-a-pat,
While her kittens frisk round her in fun.
And now old dog Tray, from his kennel must yelp
At the fatherless boy, looking round him for help,
Though never a word doth he say.
Come in, little boy! for mamma says you must
Have a bowl of hot milk, and some meat and a crust,
And are not to go empty away.

THE SICK CHILD; OR, THE PINE WOOD.

How I love the dusky pine wood ;
As I'm lying here so ill,
I could fancy I was walking
In the pine wood by the hill.

Filling both my hands with flowers
In the ruddy sunset light,
In and out the shadowy branches,
Where the wood-doves say "Good-night."

In the pleasant pine wood alleys
Overhead the dark boughs meet,
And the amber cones are falling
Ripe and fragrant at my feet.

Oh, the thought is like cold water,
When I'm feeling weak and faint,
Bringing pictures to my fancy,
That no brush can ever paint!

I've a house within the pine wood,
No one knows of, but myself,
I've a seat there, and a table,
And a hollow tree for shelf.

And the seat it is a *real one*,
Which the wood has overgrown,

And my table is a pine tree,
By a tempest overthrown.

There I creep, so nicely hidden,
No one else can find the place,
It's so covered up in branches,
To a pleasant, flowery space,

Where I hear the partridge whistle,
And can see the scudding hares,
Startling up the pretty pheasant,
In the silence unawares.

There I pull the cowslips drooping
Into garlands sweet and shy,
Blossoms through each pale stalk looping,
Just as you would hook and eye.

There last year I hid my almonds
To enrich the squirrel's heap,
And just now I thought I heard him
Cracking almonds in my sleep.

There I go to make up stories,
And repeat the rhymes I learn,
To the wood-doves, who are telling
Prettier stories in return.

All my secrets I can tell there,
And the forest keeps them well :
Though the winds may rudely question,
Not a leaf will dare to tell !

From the shallow pool beside me
Comes a buzz of summer flies,
And the noiseless flash, and flutter
Of the moths and butterflies ;

And I watch their bright wings glitter
In the shadowy silence there
Till I often grow as noiseless
As those creatures of the air.

If I then should see the wood-nymphs
Passing, as in Grecian story,
Or the ears of some old Satyr
Bristling through the branches hoary,

Or the laughing flower-crown'd faces
Of the frolic Fauns go by,
With sly jeers and quaint grimaces,
Should I fear them? should I fly?

MIDWINTER.

This morning in midwinter
How soft it is and mild!
As a mother's loving arm
About a shivering child,
As a tender mother's kiss
Turning trouble into bliss
So fair its fleeting sunshine,
So beautiful it is!
Dew is dropping from the briars,
Birds are feeding in the shrubs,
They pull the worms up from the grass,
And peck the root for grubs;
Afar in golden distance
The sheep and cattle browse,
And in the cheerful house
Sings a bird that never tires,
For the sun has lit his wires,
As warmly as in Spring,

Merry voices from the boughs
Are answering his within,
As singly or together,
In the short-lived sunny weather
They sing, and sing, and sing!

BEDTIME AND THE ROVER.

THE cedar shadows long and low,
Were lying on the moonlit snow,
Within, the firelight's ruddy glow

Shone bright on Johnny's golden head,
'Twas near his time to go to bed,
When he, with many a coaxing kiss,
Begged for a story, "Tell me please
The very prettiest tale you know:"
Then I (to quiet),—told him this:—

THE ROVER.

A little kid came bleating to the door,
I rose and let him in,
And warm new milk adown his throat did pour,
He was but bone and skin;

A new-born kid whose mother unbefriended
Died in the mountain frost,
I rubbed his stiffened limbs, and warmed and tended,
And comforted the lost.

"Stay with me, I will give thee milk enough
Until grown stout and strong,
To crop the tender thistle and the tough
That grow the lanes among.

How pleasant in the happy summer-time
To play at hide and seek
Here in the valley, never more to climb
Yon craggy mountain peak!"

The little creature gave a drowsy bleat
Of comfort and relief,
And licked my hand, and nestled at my feet,
And slept away his grief.

Oh, those were happy days! when I awoke,
Roused by his plaintive voice,
And leapt from the slumber ere the morning broke
To tend him and rejoice.

And when the first pale primroses were seen
His horns began to bud;
He cropped sow-thistles, gambolled on the green,
And slept, or chewed the cud.

And soon the dairy maidens would complain
Of butter newly churned
Stamped by a cloven hoof, and grieve in vain
For milk-pails overturned.

The men would rate the fairy-footed thing
For trampling the young corn,
And vow to beat him, and his neck to wring,—
I laughed them all to scorn!

But one thing troubled me; from day to day
He clambered left and right,
And I must trudge by crag and mountain way
To keep him in my sight.

The beams of sunset lit the mountain ledge,
When over crag and hollow
The nimble kidling leapt from edge to edge
Inviting me to follow.

I strove to chase him still,—but slipped and fell,
And stretched my hands in vain.—
"Come back to me, and all may yet be well!"
He came not back again.

One foot advanced, his listening head I see
Above the sharp descent,
"Come back," I cry, "the way's too hard for me,
Come back and be content!"

Perhaps he might—I know not—he was good,
And loved to do my will,
But he had found companions wild and rude
That came between us still.

For one (a lovely little snow-white kid)
Leapt over him and ran,
And then, forgetting me, that wept and chid,
An endless game began.

I watched the slight-horned, merry-hearted pair
Leaping from height to height,
Sporting with others in the golden air
That faded into night.

And then they wearied, or I saw no more,
But strove with pain to rise,
My ankle sprained, I limped along footsore,
The tears within my eyes.

And as I went I thought of many things,
Of that cold winter-tide,
When on the mountain, by the frozen springs,
My favourite's mother died.

Again I heard the orphan's feeble bleat,
That touched my girlish nature,
And felt my heart grow warm, my bosom beat
In pity for the creature.

But all is over now, I softly sighed,
And I have done my part ;
My kid is happy on the mountain wide,
Then why so sad my heart ?

AN AIR VOYAGE.

COME in, little bird, do not hop on one leg,
And shiver out there in the sleet,
The fire burns brightly ; come in, sir, I beg,
Or you'll get a sad cramp in your feet.

Don't starve out of doors in the cold and the gloom,
But taste of the feast I've prepared ;
What say your bright eyes peeping into the room ?
"I should like to come in if I dared !"

Pretty bird ! I have heard there are countries afar
Which only stray travellers know,
Where the birds and the beasts are as tame as things are
That never have met with a foe.

Suppose you should take a small friend of your
own,
I—the little dog Dance, for a crony,
And fly, you and I, to an isle of our own,
Full of cocoa-nuts, bread-fruit, and honey?

You shall built your sweet nest in a tamarind
tree,
By the side of a murmuring stream,
Whose waters shall make the rough way to the
sea,
As fruitful and fair as a dream.

I'll weave out of palm leaves a house by the
wave
(Such shelter the sun would require),
And lie down to sleep in the cool mossy cave,
With little dog Dance my esquire.

Peeping in with the sun, leaping over the head
Of sentinel Dance at the door,
A little wild monkey will bring me, for bread,
Some fruit and sweet nuts from his store.

The chattering parrots, the tall-tufted lories
Shall flash in the rising sunshine,
I'll match, with our own, their most fanciful stories,
And on a ripe cocoa-nut dine.

Fresh oysters for supper, and cocoa-nut milk
For breakfast—how nice it will be!
I'll wear a gay jacket of glistering silk,
The silkworm will spin it for me.

Old apes will take counsel together, and say,
"The creature is harmless and good,
He may teach us a secret worth knowing some day
If we serve him with fruits from our wood.

"It is easy to see when we stand on two feet
We are nearly related to him,
Let us pay him the courteous respect that is meet
To a kinsman so dainty of limb."

So near to the sea, being valiant and wise,
Little Dance will catch fish for himself,
Or he'll bark till the fairies draw near with supplies
To quiet the turbulent elf.

And Titania would hug him, and not be rebuffed
At the boldest of favours he'd ask ;
Such as, "Bring a fat humming-bird, roasted and stuffed,
With a flagon from Oberon's cask ! "

As for you, little bird, you would feed all the year
On viands more luscious than ours,
And your young ones would learn in that beautiful sphere
To suck the fresh honey of flowers.

And then your sweet music ! The light-hearted Ape
Would dance to it all the day long,
And the parrot would sit in her glossy green cape
And ogle, and mimic your song.

To gather strange flowers, by many new ways,
Of the forest I'd dreamily stroll,
And bathe where the plantain and palm overlays
A fountain as smooth as a bowl.

The blue of the lotus, the green of the weed
Should shadow my hands and my feet,
I'd cut, like old Pan, a stout pipe from a reed
And fill it with music most sweet.

At dawn I'll go down to the beach to inhale
The sea-breeze, where Dance, for delight,
Will sport till he scarce knows his head from his tail
Or leap like a kid on the height.

And climbing fair ledges of vine-covered rocks
At sunset, I'll pipe with such skill,
The beasts and the birds shall draw near in a flock,
And follow wherever I will.

What solemn-eyed fishes, what fanciful shapes
Would peer from the depths of the sea!
What melons, and huge water melons the Apes!
Would gather and offer to me!

I would sing them a song, I would tell them a tale,
In return for such bountiful fare,
And teach them to fashion a boat with a sail
Should carry by sea and by air.

And you, little bird, would perch up on the mast,
Or flutter and sing in the sky,
Ah me! you have finished your supper at last
And out of the window you fly.

YO, CHEERILY!

"Now heaven preserve our only son!
There's squally weather near:"
Said Ben the sun-browned Fisherman,
His wife grew pale to hear:

Out upon the ocean
The storm raged fearfully,—
"Send down top-gallants! Strike the masts!"
'Yo, Cheerily!'
Out on the sea,
And far from the shore
My father and my mother
Shall I ever see you more?

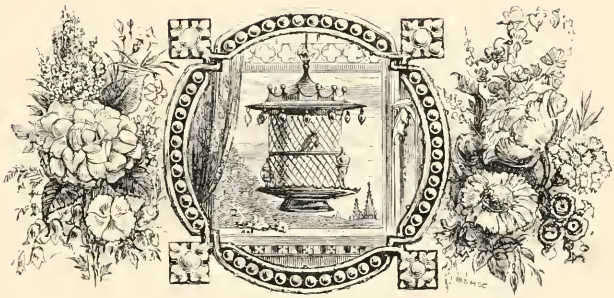
The sea-birds nest is in the rock,
The Eagle's in the clouds,
But heaven defend the sailor lad
Amid the whistling shrouds!
In the windy darkness,
Buffetted and hurled,
He wrestles with the wrestling ropes
Till all is closely furled.
Out on the sea,
Now lower and now higher,
It's O, that I may tell the tale
Beside my father's fire!

"Man, man the pumps, and pipe all hands,
Or drowning men are we!"
They lash the helmsman to the helm,
And labour steadily.
The ship has furled her flowing wing,
And heavily she rolls,
A shapeless bulk—a lifeless thing,
But full of living souls:
Up from the sea
The wall-like breakers pour,
God help the little company,
And bring them safe ashore!

On heaven they call—and as it rose
The ocean's wrath declines;
Again the bending canvas blows,
Again the morning shines.
The gallant ship, so tempest tost,
Sails bravely on her way,
The lad is smiling in his sleep,
In fancy far away.

Listening to the rustle
Of boughs across the sun,
Where is no tree,
And shoreless waters run.

He climbs, in dream, the rocky path
Above his native bay,
He sees again the roses bloom,
And hedges white with May;
His faithful Rover dashes out
And fawns about his knee,
His mother's kiss is on his cheek,
And who so glad as he?
Softly sways the ocean,
Whispering to the shore,
There's loving memory of the lad
Within his father's door!



THE CAGED CANARY.

MORNING fair to night succeeds ;
Baby's laughing at the fire ;
My canary shells his seeds,
And scrapes his beak against the wire.

Now he's tweet-a-tweeting loud,
Ruffling up his wings and neck ;
Now he sleeks his plumage proud,
Cleans it clear of spot or speck.

Now with golden feathers flirting
Water over golden sand ;
Now his twittering and chirping
Turns to music loud and grand.

What a carol ! Why, I'm certain
It would nearly fill a church ;
And he sings, and sings, until he
Almost tumbles off his perch.

Oh ! my golden, gay canary,
Singing sweetly in all weathers,
Take the thanks of little Mary,
With the sunshine on your feathers !

Grateful for the smallest favours,
Only sand, and seed, and water—
With your gracious, gay behaviours,
Sweet the lesson you have taught her.

THE PEAR TREE.

THE PEAR TREE.

MARY said her lesson truly,
Verb and Adverb, Noun and Vowel;
Then from out the garden tool-house
Flew to fetch her own small trowel;

For she had received that morning,
With her mother's kiss and favour,
Many precious bulbs and blossoms,
As a prize for a good behaviour.

Mary's name is in her garden
(Neatly raked and free from weed),
M A R Y—four large letters—
Writ in cress and mustard seed.

Through her garden runs a footpath,
Wide enough for little feet,
And a tiny bench, where Mary
Just contrives to take a seat:

And an old and mossy pear tree
Puts forth blossoms here and there,
Raising Mary's hopes; but never
Finding heart enough to bear.

Watering pots are emptied on it,
Withered twigs are lopped away;
And the shade of Mary's bonnet
Flits about it day by day.

Never mind! It *is* a pear tree,
Though we cannot see the pears,
Tended by a garden fairy,
In the evening of its years.

Never mind! The pears are coming,
Always with the last new shoot;
And the pears she sees in fancy,
Well supply the lack of fruit.

Never mind! The bees are feeding
In the blossoms of the lime,
And the April hours are leading
On to happy summer time.

OVER THE SEA.

BIRDS are flying across the seas,
To our island of rain and dew,
And children are running under the trees,
To welcome the first cuckoo.
"Over the seas, when skies are blue,
I come again—Cuckoo, cuckoo!"
And they mimic his cry,
Now low, now high,
Crying, "Welcome back, cuckoo!"

The sun is shining across the seas,
On our island of rain and dew,
And nightingales sing, as the days increase,
"Whit, whit, whit, whit, tioux!"

And the children sing,
And dance in a ring,
And pigeons cry "coo-roo-o-o,"
And the linnet and thrush are answering,
And larks in the sunny blue.

"In the merry, merry May"
(The children say),
The bushes are white, and the sweet birds sing
In air and trees,
And over the seas,
A tweet-a-tweet cuckoo,
Merrily whistling in sun and breeze,
"Whit, whit, whit, whit, tioux!"

Ships are sailing, in sun and breeze,
To our island of rain and dew;
Shadow-like over sunny seas,
Swan-like over the blue:
Tossing, like tempest-driven trees;
Wrecked with cargo and crew,—

It's O for a land whose skies are clear,
And never a tempest blew,
Where men may rest that labour here,
In sun, and storm, and dew!

COVENT GARDEN MARKET.

COME to Covent Garden market,
Through the early London streets,
When the heavy country waggons
Are unlading all their sweets,

The heavy country waggons,
And the heavy country boys,
Who stare in stolid wonder
At the market and its noise.

Oh how fragrant are the flowers,
And how picture-like the fruits,
The peas and young potatoes,
With the mould about their roots.

The pinks and early roses,
The rhubarb, red and mottled,
The delicious pine-like odour
Of strawberries fresh pottled.

See, the flower-girls are tying,
Beneath each tented stall,
Fresh flowers, with tasteful neatness,
Into posies large and small ;

Even ferns and fairy mosses
Every child, by hill and vale,
Can take or leave at pleasure,
Here are ticketed for sale.

O the priceless country treasures !
O, the message that they bring
To the old care-laden city
Of the coming of the spring !

What whiffs of sudden freshness
These smoky vapours house,

From the dark and dewy pastures,
  Where sheep and cattle browse.

O, the black and breathless pinewood,
  Where yon languid bells of blue,
Like pools of purple water,
  In shadowy silence grew!

O, the moist mysterious sweetness
  Of lilies, that were only
But yester-morning breathing
  In the forest vast and lonely!

For there's more within these waggons,
  To weary London gaze,
Than earth can weigh or measure,
  Or market man appraise.

Bright gleams of golden moorland,
  Cool shadows from the trees,
A dash of ocean's freedom,
  And a sprinkle of its breeze:—

Sweet thoughts of home and kindred,
Of parents old and kind,
Of the cottage, where the rosebuds
Throw their shadows on the blind:

Of days more pure and peaceful,
Of lives more simply good,
With more time for thoughts of heaven,
And for doing all we should.

See, yonder, a poor father
Has bought his sickly son
A little bunch of cowslips
That he loves to look upon.

And the mother softly murmurs,
"Ah," if Will could run about,
Among the cows and cowslips,
He would soon get strong and stout."

And she looks with tearful pity,
At her darling, who has known
No home but the Great City,
And the bustle of the town.

And yet the sight is cheerful,
  And there's joy for many a heart,
Brought by the creaking waggons,
  To old London's busy mart.

THE BOWER-BIRD IN THE CITY.

HALF musingly with head aside
A little city maiden tied,
A garland of wild flowers,
And still she murmured, "If I could
But see you growing in the wood,
Within your native bowers!"

And as she twined her garland quaint,
Some fairy music soft and faint
She sang the flowers to cheer,
That press around and close her in,
And fill her lap from knee to chin,
As if they loved to hear.

"You bending blue-bells" (thus she sung)
"Are modest maidens fair and young,
Too shy to make a noise,
You primroses so fully out,
Seem half inclined to laugh and shout
Like merry-making boys.

"Living in ancient forest hall,
Lilies are ladies, one and all,
Each singing bird admires,
You read delightful fairy books,
And fan yourselves in grassy nooks,
And play on golden lyres.

"And others up the brooklet sail,
A silver boat, so pure, so pale,
The moonbeams through it lighten,
Or on dark waters shine afar,
Till up in heaven some sister star,
Descend the wave to brighten.

"How good is God to make you flowers!
To send the sunbeams and the showers,
To nurse you into beauty,
You only live a little while,
But then your life is as a smile,
Of blessedness and duty."

So sang the happy little one,
While sitting in the morning sun,
Her flowery garland stringing;

Until the grim old London room,
Shone through its smoke and city gloom,
And laughed to hear her singing.

So like a bird within a bower,
That every swiftly closing flower,
Its petals lightly raised,
And sweetly breathed and softly smiled,
To bless the gentle City child,
Who thus its beauty praised.

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